



MEETING EXPENSES GUIDELINES 2018-2020

**To: All Councillors, Committee Members and Working Parties,
General Secretary and all Organisers**

Expenses Guidelines September 2018 to August 2020

Given the need to safeguard the union's finances, it is ESSENTIAL that expenses are kept as low as possible. The following guidelines approved by the Council will therefore apply for the period from September 2018 to August 2020.

HOW TO CLAIM

Members must complete an Expenses Claim Form. Receipts must be enclosed with the Claim Form – except as regards bus and tube travel where no receipts are required.

It is the union's policy that expenses should normally be paid by BANK TRANSFER (BACS) wherever possible. It is no longer practical for us to make payments in cash, except in exceptional circumstances. Claims will therefore be paid by BANK TRANSFER (BACS) or, occasionally, by CHEQUE. If claiming for more than one meeting, Members should complete a separate Expenses Claim Form for each meeting.

If receiving payment by BACS or by cheque would present unreasonable difficulty, this should be discussed in advance with the Honorary Treasurer or, in his absence, the Head of Finance.

Similarly, it is recognised that, if rail or air tickets are purchased in advance, members may be out of pocket for some time.

Consequently, expenses may be claimed as soon as they are incurred subject to the relevant receipts being attached to the Expenses Claim Form and authorised by the appropriate member of Equity staff. BACS payment runs will be made on the Wednesday following each Council meeting. Other BACS payment runs will be made between Council meetings as often as possible. The intention is that members should receive reimbursement within 14 days of their expenses being authorised.

WHAT YOU MAY CLAIM

1. **Meal claims:** You will be reimbursed for any meal claimed up to the maximum allowable for each meal. The maximums for each meal are as

follows: breakfast (£6.00), lunch (£8.50) and evening meal (£18). For example, if you provide a receipt for an evening meal for £15 you will be reimbursed the £15 paid; if you provide a receipt for £20 then you will be reimbursed the maximum for an evening meal which is £18.

When claiming for a meal(s) you must submit a copy of your receipt(s) along with a completed claim form. If you submit an original receipt, Equity will make a copy and return the original to you. You must keep original receipts for your own records.

- Breakfast (leaving home before 7.30am) up to £6.00
- Lunch (FULL attendance at a WHOLE day meeting) up to £8.50
- Evening meal up to £18.00

For “long distance” travellers 2 meals can be claimed if away from home for 12 hours or more and 1 meal if away from home for 8 hours (but less than 12).

2. **Train.** Cheapest standard class fares (receipts or tickets MUST be produced). Advice on all fares is available from the Finance Dept. Equity will reimburse 50% of the cost of an annual railcard so long as the member can demonstrate that the purchase of a railcard will, over time, lead to cost savings for the union.
3. **Underground & bus fares.** Details please - but no receipts needed under £10.
4. **Taxis.** Only in exceptional circumstances (mobility/disability problems); please discuss beforehand with the Honorary Treasurer or appropriate Organiser.
5. **Car travel.** 45p per mile. When used for partial or whole journey. Accurate details of the journey(s) undertaken must be provided. Members should remember that car travel is always more expensive than public transport and should endeavour to use public transport if this is at all possible/feasible. Equity reserves the right to query any car mileage claims that appear to be excessive.
6. **Bicycle travel.** 20p per mile.
7. **Air fares.** MUST be booked or approved by staff Organisers. Please aim for a budget flight wherever possible and book as far in advance as possible.
8. **Advance travel.** Members are encouraged to purchase tickets for rail and air travel as far in advance as possible. It is the union’s policy that, if last-minute work or illness intervenes which prevents a member’s attendance at an Equity meeting, the union will reimburse the cost of any unused travel tickets so long as these have been purchased at advantageous advance rates.

9. **Expenses incurred on a return journey.** Any member who wishes to claim a receipted expense incurred on a return journey home e.g. meal, taxi, car park etc. should send a copy of the receipt with the claim form directly to Natalie Barker (nbarker@equity.org.uk) and it will be processed for BACS payment as soon as possible.
10. **Overnight stays.** Normally only if attending meetings on consecutive days. Please try to find hotel accommodation that is reasonable. Consult the staff if having difficulty. If travelling to London the night before a meeting is cheaper (Advance purchase/savers etc) than travelling on the day of the meeting, this is permitted.
11. **Childcare/Caring responsibilities.** It is Equity's policy that any member elected to Council, a Committee or a Working Party has the right to attend such meetings if available to do so. If a member attending one of these meetings has to incur expense because of childcare or other caring responsibilities, s/he MUST discuss this IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING with the Honorary Treasurer so that a suitable arrangement can be agreed. The union will NOT reimburse any caring expenses which have not been agreed in advance with the Honorary Treasurer. Once agreed, a receipt addressed to the member concerned by the carer will be required on each occasion. Such receipts MUST give details of:
- Name of carer
 - Address of carer, including postcode
 - Relationship – i.e. Registered child minder, Relative, Friend
 - Amount received
 - Date of issue
12. **Allowances for disability or mobility problems** are not covered by the standard allowances detailed above and need to be discussed and agreed with the Honorary Treasurer.
13. **Attendance at recruitment meetings**
Expenses up to a cap of £25 may be authorised by the appropriate member of staff on the basis that the member has the relevant knowledge and experience required to attend the recruitment meeting and that receipts will be provided and the expenses claimed on the Expenses Claim Form.
14. **Members who require a support worker or personal assistant**
- a. That the union should continue to operate a flexible arrangement to assist and enable an elected or co-opted member to fulfil their responsibilities to Council, committees or working parties.
 - b. That a member has the right to attend a meeting of the Council, committees or working party and if they require a support worker or personal assistant or have dependants they should contact the Honorary Treasurer and have a discussion on how the union can best

assist the member to attend any such meeting so that an appropriate arrangement can be agreed.

- c. When an arrangement has been agreed the Honorary Treasurer will inform the General Secretary, Head of Finance and the appropriate member of staff.
- d. Receipts must be provided as required and all expense claims made on the Expenses Claim Form. Please see the section 11 above, which specifies the details that the union requires.

PLEASE NOTE:

HMRC have confirmed to us that Equity members are not employees of the Union, but volunteers. Any expenses received as volunteers should NOT be included in members' self-assessment tax returns as performers or sole traders. Despite this, Equity wishes to stress the importance of all members keeping receipts so that, in the event of an enquiry into the personal tax affairs of a member, he/she has a robust system in place to prove what the expenses were incurred for and to differentiate transparently between self-employed expense payments and those that relate to volunteer expense payments.

The Finance Department and other Equity Staff are authorised to reimburse members' expenses only within the above limits and guidelines as endorsed by the Council - your cooperation will avoid delay and any awkwardness when submitting claims.

Equity continues to be mindful and grateful for the contribution made by all those who freely give up their own time to assist and advise the union, whether as a Councillor or as a member of a Committee or Working Party.

**BRYN EVANS
Honorary Treasurer**